

THE CAPTAIN OF HIX

Strikes me the way to get at it best, though, is to begin by admittin' that the pick of us has our punk streaks. Yew, I know that John D. has a favorite motto that runs something like that; but what he means when he quotes it I've never figured out. As for me—well, I ain't pleadin' not guilty, and I hope I ain't boastin' either.

But out here in Rockyhurst on the Sound, thirty-two seconds from 42d st.,—when you're lucky—why, we get to know the people for a mile around so well that anyone of us could give you all the personal and private hist'ry, past, present, and future, of any of the rest. You don't have to go nosin' after it, either. It just comes to you and there's no dodgin'.

When the Hixses themselves arrived, though, all that Josh was dropped. Somehow or other, they seemed to fit the house, and the house seemed to fit them. He was sort of a bulky, loud dressed gent who'd prob'ly been one of these pretty boys before he fleshed up so much; but he'd acquired heavy chops along with his forty-eight belt measure, and his complexion had gone bad, and the result was the sort of flabby, white livered, pie-faced party that I don't take much stock in as a rule.

Mornin' he wa'n't apt to be quite so genial, and that laugh of his seemed a little stagy; but he always made a bluff at the good fellow game. Afternoons he was diff'rent, specially if he had stopped at three or four cafes on the way to the station. I

One of the bowbunch down at the Produce Exchange, Hix was. Dealt in flour or something by the trainload lot, and was simply scoopin' in commissions with a net, they said. Whether he was or not, he put up a happy-days front, — coachman in livery to meet him every night with a yellow wheeled dogcart, and all that sort of thing.

Still, Sadie said how she had kind of an int'restin' face, and as she'd mother, and they was neighbors, she meant to call just the same, and she did. As it happened, Mrs. E. Crosby wasn't at home; but Sadie had a long chat with E. Crosby's mother, a nice, meek, little old lady who seemed glad to see her and got confidential about what a nice boy Eddie'd always been to her, and how proud she was of him, and how talented her daughter-in-law was.

"Now, Shorty," says Sadie. "don't be disagreeable. I've no doubt the Hicks are very nice. What have you against them, anyway!"

See how easy you can drift into sizin' folks up sarcastic? Besides, I didn't have any call to put a label on 'em, one way or another; at least, not until after the dog business.

"Hello, pup! What's your hurry?" says I, soothin' like.
 "Gr-r-r-r!" says the bull, makin' a vicious dive at my calves.

"Brute!" says she. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"Excuse me," says I; "but I don't look at it that way."

"Kicking a poor little dog in that heartless fashion!" says she.

1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 26

"We had our little talk on the phone after the morning after the dog incident. He didn't open with the usual ball, 'What a Shorby old sport!' Instead, he said he walks over with a can of disinfectant and disinfects, injured and all, and then he complains."

"I say, McCabe," says he, "I hope it won't be necessary for you to kick that dog of mine around again."

"Oh, well," says Hix, shrugging his shoulders, "if you insist on taking such a trifling incident so seriously—"

"Does the dog too?" says I, at which E. Crosby flushes up some, turns on his heel and walks off. From then on all the greetin' (

we might have smoothed things out then and there. But that ain't my strong suit. So matters drifts along, and Sadie gets rung into it, and Mother Hix don't return the call, like she said she was goin' to, and different neighbors took sides, and so on. You know how it goes.

She certainly does look stunning in some of them," says Sadie. "I wish I could design costumes like that!"

"You can't tell," says I. "I know a lot of rich brokers I wouldn't pick out for office boys on their looks. And Hix is getting in more picks every day."

"First off I thought it was some
 crazy padhead, but after I'd
 showed for the heavy bags un-
 der the eyes, and the stubbly
 crop of beard, and the state of
 my clothes, I saw what it was.
 "Who he said," says I.
 "Yes," says he, "honey, and
 lucky. 'Hi!'"

"All right, I won't," says I. "But take a chair, man! Your knees look wobbly. There now what was it you came up here for?"

"You ain't quite in trim for a debate," says L. "But why dig it up now?"

"I don't know," says he. "There are enough worse mat-

"Well, what of it?" says L. "You don't suppose I've been loafin' around grindin' my teeth about that all this time" do you? "Bah! If you must thresh it out again, wait until you're in mm mm mm."

"Ret!" says I. "You're not ro
oin' to finish now. Go home
and buck up. You'll be all right
n the mornin'."

"It's worse than that," says
fix. "I—I'm ruined!"
"Gwan!" says I. "A man in
our state ain't any fit judge of

"Hub," says I. "Four days
it, eh? And in your mushy
condition that's enough to knock
you out good and plenty. Had

... "Debut: You wouldn't see
... everyone, ... everywhere.
... then—then I've been plunging
... cotton. They played me for
... sucker," he said, then he said

"I—I don't know," says he, "I suppose we were trying to make too much of a spurge. We got started, and couldn't stop. It's like a whirlpool—sucks

...and the ...

But in this case I knew neither; I said, "any way." And she was not as nice and dear an old lady Sadie had described. I could not come up the look that would

"I can never face them—
"Ah, slush!" says I. "You've
straighten things out, too!"

ne leads. I've let things go, important things, because I couldn't decide one way or the other. I dread little things too, like meeting strangers, or open-

"—I couldn't stand it! Don't talk to me about heart disease, tuberculosis, or any of those dreadful things!"

"Ah, can the medical tommy-

"Why," says he, "what do you mean?"

"Just that," says I. "You've got a brain, ain't you, like the rest of us? Well is it on the job?"

near as I can figure out, the
you've resigned command. -
you've eaten anything that was ag
sandy, sopped up any liquid that for
might be shoved at you, and no

"But what can I do?" moans the girl.
"Do," says I. "Why fight your way back to the bridge and let the girls' orders again?"

"Only these last two days."

"Good work!" says I. "But at we a't you did it. Most of all order was mine. Now you are a little obedient."

Course, I look hard at the
at broom; but it's a minute or
before he can shake himself
together enough to walk over to
"He don't do any thorough
b of brushin', I'll admit—

"I—I—yes, I'll go get a
saw," says he.

"Why not put that off until

"[—]—Thank you, McCabs, I go," says he.

ought to hear me, too, that I
 and a corner on all the morals
 and virtues this side of the pearly
 gates; but I pumped him so full
 of good advice that it's a wonder
 he didn't get the earache, just
 to tell me. By two o'clock

"I'll try," says he, givin' me a grateful grip, and walks out. Whether he'd hit up the booze ain and end in some hotel room with the gas turned on or

"Why," says I, "you don't
have to do that."

"Then the lady broke in, grabbing one of my hands earnestly. 'Mr. McCabe,' says she, 'I know that you have done for Edw-
ard; and I want to say—'"

"He's coming, he's coming!"